

GOPAC, that disturbs the Democrats (though they are, in fact, urging the special counsel to expand his inquiry to include some of GOPAC's activities). What really distresses the Democratic leadership is the fact that Gingrich has used GOPAC to forge a spirited GOP congressional majority that's serious about welfare reform, tax reduction and shrinking the power of the federal government.

To a considerable extent, the Ethics Committee's willingness to order just one charge probed vindicates the speaker. We hope, therefore, that Gingrich takes heart, stands his ground and stays the course. Opportunities to change the direction in American politics don't come around often; and if the Republicans don't succeed in disrupting business as usual in Washington now, the chance will likely pass.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 134
MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING
APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL
YEAR 1996

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 20, 1995

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 134, a measure that will provide

the payment of compensation and pension benefits for our Nation's veterans and their families for fiscal year 1996. I am glad to see that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are at least concerned about some aspect of their obligation to these patriots who answered the call of their Nation.

Despite the fact that this resolution has a noble objective, it is clearly incomplete. It simply does not go far enough. While our veterans and their families will be somewhat comforted by the passage of this resolution, who will give some financial assurance to the millions of Americans who continue to face uncertain futures because Congress has not fulfilled its obligations regarding the remaining appropriations Bills? These remaining bills, which are not included in this resolution, are so harmful and unreasonable that the President has had to veto them and no action has been taken by the House to improve them or continue them in a continuing resolution.

Take for example, the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. Action on this measure is still pending. While the Department of Health and Human Services is closed, Medicare and Medicaid applications cannot be processed. While the Department of Labor is closed, unemployment applications cannot be processed.

In addition, the drastic cuts in the appropriations measure for the Department of Edu-

cation will deny critical resources to schools and communities across the country. The \$1.1 billion cut in title 1 will deny over one million children the basic assistance they need in math and reading. The 50 percent cut in safe and drug free schools will take away the resources necessary to provide children a safe, crime free, and violence free classroom in which to attend school.

While we take these steps to assist our veterans, the threat to our environment continues to intensify. Because the VA-HUD-and Independent Agencies appropriations bill is not completed, environmental protection and oversight has come to a screeching halt. There is no enforcement of the Nation's environmental laws—laws that protect our water and air. Polluters are going unchecked everyday that the EPA is closed. Furthermore, the level of cuts proposed for EPA in the FY96 appropriations bill deprives our children of clean and safe environment.

Mr. Speaker, the list of vital programs that enhance the quality of life for all Americans is far greater than just that of veterans compensation and pension programs. What we are doing for America's veterans tonight is the right thing to do. We should do the right thing for all Americans and pass a clean continuing resolution.